

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's #
64-7

USGS Quad
Whitman

Area

Form #
14

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Town **Hanson**

Place

Address **541 High Street**

Historic Name **Thomas House**

Use: Present **residence**

Original **residence**

Date **before 1830 or c. 1770**

Source **maps & White's Houses**

Style/Form **gambrel cape**

Architect **N/A**

Exterior Material:

Foundation **granite**

Wall/Trim **clapboard**

Roof **wood shingles**

Outbuildings **none**

Major Alterations **none**

Condition **excellent**

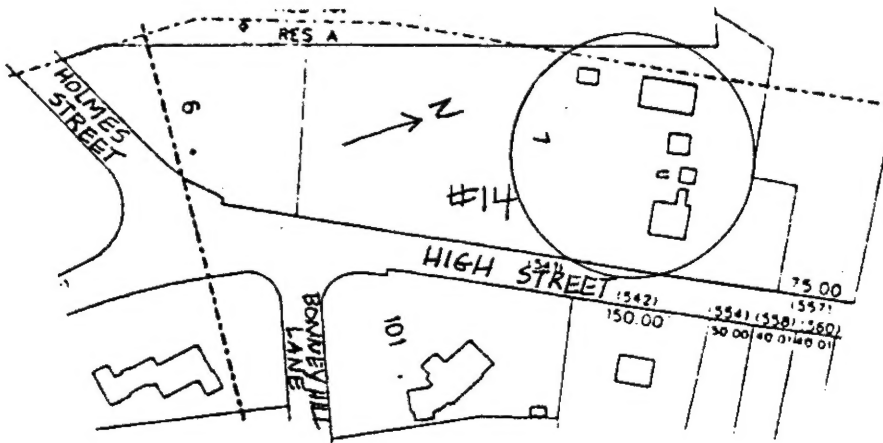
Moved **no**

Acreage **2.29 acres**

Setting **village residential**



Sketch Map



Recorded by **Dempsey/Driemeyer**

Organization **Hanson Historical
Commission**

Date **April 1996**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Thomas House at 541 High Street is a well-preserved, one-and-one-half story gambrel-roofed cape house. The Cape Cod house was especially popular in Hanson in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though the use of a gambrel roof is comparatively rare. The five-bay wide by double-pile deep cape exhibits a number of characteristic features. These include the large center chimney and a small, one-story rear service ell. The original masses remain remarkably unaltered with the exception of the insertion of a secondary entrance centered on the left-side elevation. The minimal and simple decorative detailing accents window and door openings and the building's edges. The Thomas House detailing includes fluted pilasters and a slightly raised entablature around the front door; a wide, molded entablature; and thin corner boards. Several outbuildings are located behind the house, suggesting the house's original small-scale rural agricultural operations. These include a twentieth-century, sizable, one-and-one-half story, steeply-pitched, gable-roofed barn sited parallel to the house with a small front addition. A small, gambrel-roofed garage is located between the house and barn. A small, dilapidated, vertical board shed is located to the left of the barn.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

High Street traverses Bonney Hill, the highest elevation in Hanson. Historical maps show that the northern half of High Street remained relatively undeveloped until the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. The Thomas House remained in the same family from the time of the house's construction until at least the 1930s. Joseph White indicates the house was built in 1770 by John Thomas, a brother of Edward Thomas who built 324 Holmes Street (see form no. 20). Historic maps identify John Thomas as the owner in 1830. By the turn-of-the-twentieth century Miss Bathsheba Thomas owned the house and continued to do so for at least thirty years. The original barn was located across the street and Joseph White indicates it was built as a wedding present by John Thomas for his wife. The barn was extant until at least the 1930s. The 1832 valuation list shows Thomas had different types of land including 12 acres of English mowing, 4 acres of tillage, 12 acres of A.C. Pasture, 13 acres of A.B. Pasture, and 20 acres of young wood. Livestock included 1 yoke oxen, a horse, 3 young cows and 2 swine.

REFERENCES

Smith, Plan of Hanson, 1830

Walling, Map of Hanson, 1856

Walker, Atlas of Plymouth County, 1870

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Community
Hanson

Property Address
541 High Street

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form



Check all that apply:

☒ Individually eligible.

☐ Eligible only in a historic district.

☐ Contributing to a potential district.

☐ Potential historic district.

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by **Dempsey/Driemeyer.**

This property is significant as a well-preserved example of early building patterns in the town of Hanson, in a settlement configuration distinctive to the town and probably the region. Among the best examples of its type in town, it may be individually eligible but should be evaluated for its role in potential districts when its neighbors can be examined more carefully. The property meets criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.